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The Friday Letter

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On the Hill



House Marks Up Fiscal Year 1989 Budget

On May 26, the full House Appropriations Committee marked up and reported for House consideration the Fiscal Year 1989 USDA budget request. On page 2 is a summary of the House markup as it affects FNS programs.

Senate Passes Amendment to National School Lunch Act

On May 27, the Senate passed, as amended, S. 2156, a bill to amend the National School Lunch Act to require eligibility for free lunches to be based on the nonfarm income poverty guidelines prescribed by the Office of Management and Budget. On page 6 is a comparison of this bill and its companion bill in the House, H.R. 4306, which passed on May 10.

Senate Marks Up "Hunger Relief" Legislation

The "hunger relief" legislation markup scheduled by the Nutrition and Investigations Subcommittee of the Senate Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry Committee for June 8 was moved to June 9. A report on the markup will be given in the next Friday Letter.

The full committee markup of this legislation is tentatively scheduled for June 15.

Food Stamp Program Bi-Regional Conference

The Southwest and Western Regions recently hosted a Food Stamp Program Bi-Regional Conference in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Attending were 60 representatives of the two regions' 13 states, along with 10 commissioners.

Western Regional Deputy Administrator John Boozer (right) welcomed the participants, and Assistant Secretary John W. Bode (seated) spoke on welfare reform. He also participated in a roundtable discussion with commissioners and chief state welfare officials.

-Story and Photos by Judy Snow
SWRO Public Affairs Staff



Summary Of House Markup Fiscal Year 1989 Budget Request

Program	1988 Appropriation (\$ 000)	1989 Budget Request (\$ 000)	1989 House Markup (\$ 000)
Child Nutrition	\$4,497,629	: \$4,609,127	1/ : \$4,624,127
Special Milk	21,500	: 19,925	2/ : 19,925
WIC	1,802,363	: 1,876,749	3/ : 1,927,362
		:	4/
CSFP	50,000	: 47,099	3/ : 53,500
Food Stamps	12,638,880	: 12,519,705	6/ : 12,519,705
Nutrition		:	
Assistance/P.R.	879,250	: 908,250	: 908,250
Nutrition Program/		:	
Elderly	140,312	: 141,293	: 141,293
Needy Family	53,796	: 57,854	: 57,854
FPA	85,828	: 94,825	: 86,494
Total, FNS	20,169,558	: 20,274,827	: 20,338,510
TEFAP	50,000	: ---	: 50,000

1/ Excludes \$350.9 million for commodity support from AMS.

2/ Includes \$5.2 million for independent review of meal service claims; includes \$10 million for CCFP audits and \$5 million for NETP.

3/ Accounts are combined in budget for a total request of \$1.924 billion.

4/ Accounts are not combined in appropriation.

5/ No specific language on caseload levels; includes not less than \$8 million for elderly sites.

6/ Excludes error liability collections of \$162 million.

7/ Includes transfer of \$39.627 million to EFNEP; may include language on \$10 million for redemption equipment.

The Agriculture, Rural Development, and Related Agencies Subcommittee of the Senate Appropriations Committee marked up Fiscal Year 1989 USDA appropriations on June 9. The full committee has tentatively scheduled its markup for June 14.

"Just Say No" is the Message of the Day

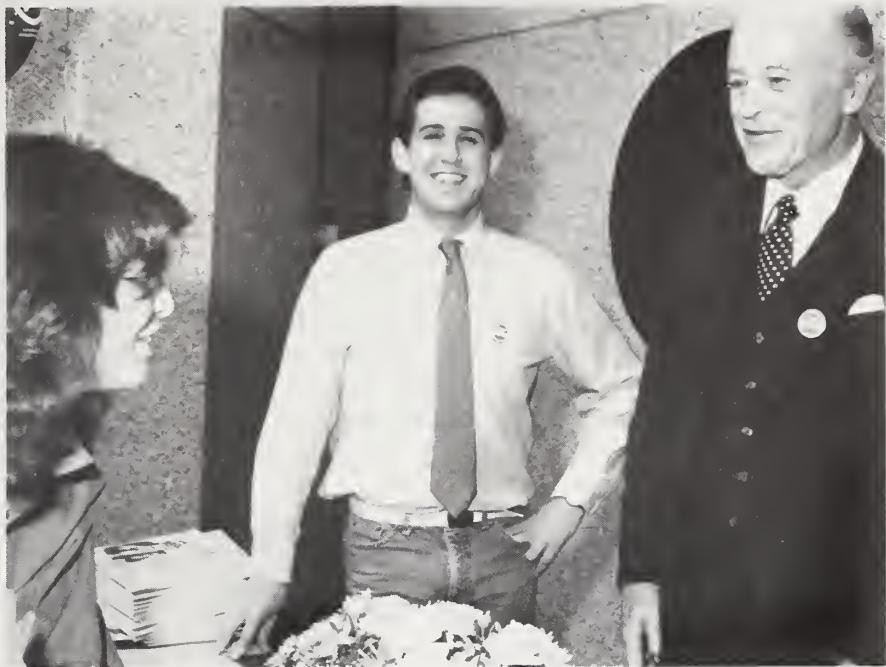
NERO designated April 12 as "Just Say No" to drugs day for employees. Many got into the spirit of the day and were seen sporting "Just Say No" buttons. The buttons were part of a promotional effort by NERO to heighten employee awareness about the escalating drug problem. FNS staff members were on hand in the lobby to distribute "Just Say No" materials and publications about drugs to employees and building visitors.

Public response to the "Just Say No" effort to fight substance abuse was very positive. Many who stopped



by the display booth for information indicated they planned to share the information with their children. Of special interest for children were "Just Say No" pencils, bookmarks, balloons, and buttons. There was also a videotape featuring Detroit Pistons basketball star Isiah Thomas speaking out against substance abuse.

Two guest speakers from the NORCAP Center at Southwood Community Hospital in Norfolk, Massachusetts--a comprehensive treatment center that works with 22 school systems to develop substance abuse prevention programs--were also part of the day's activities. They held an informal discussion with employees on efforts to remedy the increasing drug problem among young people.



Regional Administrator Harold McLean greets a visitor to the "Just Say No" booth as FNS staff member Rich Conley looks on. The booth was part of a promotional effort by NERO to heighten employee awareness about the escalating drug problem among young people.



FNS staff member Carol Stevenson hands out a copy of the Food & Nutrition magazine to an interested visitor.

NERO Officials Visit Alternate School in Connecticut

A New Haven, Connecticut, alternate school for pregnant teens served as the setting of a recent meeting between NERO and Connecticut state officials.

Harold McLean, regional administrator, and Lynn Wonders, regional Supplemental Food Programs (WIC) director, met with Dr. Frederick Adams, Connecticut's new state health commissioner, and Alma Cain, Connecticut state WIC director, to discuss ways to improve vendor management of the WIC program in Connecticut.



Lynn Wonders (left), NERO SFP director, and Harold McLean, NERO administrator, meet with Dr. Frederick Adams (right), Connecticut's new state health commissioner, before touring the Hill Health Center and Polly T. McCabe School.

The need to reduce the number of vendors through greater selection criteria and increased control over the vendors were the main issues discussed. These actions would result in a reduction in the state's food package cost and increased WIC program participation.

While in New Haven, FNS officials toured the Hill Health Center, a community-run center which provides health care to low-income people, and the Polly T. McCabe School, an alternate school for pregnant teens. Both centers have achieved quite a bit of success and attention for their work with teen parents.



Harold McLean, NERO administrator (left), and Dr. Frederick Adams, Connecticut's state health commissioner, visit a home economics class at the Polly T. McCabe School.

Of special interest were efforts by the center's WIC program to increase nutrition awareness among teen mothers at the McCabe School. Those efforts appear to be working, as the McCabe students are delivering healthier babies with higher average birthweights (5-1/2 pounds) than teen mothers who are not involved in a WIC program.



Melissa Smith, WIC nutritionist, presents a class on nutrition at the Polly T. McCabe School.

The McCabe School and the Hill Health Center WIC program will be the focus of an upcoming article for the Food & Nutrition magazine.

-Story and photos by
NERO Public Affairs Staff

Linda's Silver

Twenty-five years in the Federal Government, you say? Yup! All 25 with the Department of Agriculture? Yup! Twenty-five years with food and nutrition assistance programs? Yup!

That's how the story goes for Linda Basham, Program Development Division. June 10, 1988 marks her Silver Anniversary with the Department.

Linda started in a clerical position with the Agricultural Marketing Service in 1963. Over the years, she worked up the secretarial ladder to a GS-6 with the Consumer and Marketing Service (CMS). While at CMS, she made the transition to the professional career ladder and is now a senior food program specialist.

Linda cites as her most significant and memorable contribution to the agency her work with development and implementation of food stamp quality control, development and implementation of the food stamp E&E System (now Management Evaluation), the SSI and Elderly Cash Out demonstration, the Reading Electronic Benefit Transfer demonstration project, the Homeless Rule, and the present Welfare Reform initiative.

Congratulations, Linda.

-Story by Russ Gardiner
Program Development Division

MARO WIC ADP Work Session Highlights Innovative Systems

Representatives from eight of MARO's nine WIC state agencies met to share details of their activities in personal computer networks and distributive data processing at the local agency level.

Presentations were made on the processing systems being used in Maryland and New Jersey. Maryland's

WIC-NET and New Jersey's Statewide Uniform Delivery and Information System (SUDIS) include new and innovative distributive data processing components.

Distributive data processing will allow WIC clinics to eliminate much of their paperwork. Information on clients is fed into the computer system at the clinic and then sent to the state agency, usually once a day. In states without distributive data processing capability, clinic workers must process each client's application by hand and then send all the paperwork in batches to the data entry point (usually the state agency).



WIC-NET and SUDIS have the added feature of access to the local agency's database for ad hoc reporting and administration of local programs. The systems have the potential to generate food instruments both electronically and manually at local agency or clinic levels.

Participants also shared state agency software applications for management reports that are required by FNS and WIC state agencies, and they had an opportunity to see "hands-on" demonstrations of the various applications. Copies of disks with the state-level applications will be shared among states in the region.

A special highlight of the session was a presentation by John Freas, system manager of the North Carolina WIC program, on his state's efforts in the area of distributive data processing and administrative applications using microcomputers at the state level. Freas developed the complete complement of state and local reports using dBase III PLUS software.

-Story by MARO Public Affairs Staff

Amendment to National School Lunch Act

<u>Provision/Amendment</u>	<u>Senate Version</u>	<u>House Version</u>
Change date for making annual inflation adjustment from October 1 to July 1.*	in	in
WIC Farmers Market Demonstration Project.	not in	in
Payment of claims to school districts participating in CASH/CLOC pilot project.	in	in
Two percent WIC formula adjustment for allocating administrative funds to states.	in	not in

To date, S. 2156 and H.R. 4306 have not gone to conference.

* FNS issued regulations May 26, 1988 making the next annual adjustment effective July 1, 1988.

-Story by Catherine Whitehurst
Governmental Affairs Staff

MARO Develops Procedures to Redeem Food Stamps

Banks were calling the Richmond, Virginia, field office concerned about letters from the Minneapolis Computer Support Center (MCSC). The letters told the banks they may have serious internal problems with food stamp redemptions.

MCSC reconciles the amounts of food stamps the banks redeem with the amounts listed on the redemption certificates that the banks receive from grocers. MCSC then sends out letters to banks who have a difference of \$10,000 or more.

Richmond field staff was encountering difficulties with financial institutions when they were asked to comply with USDA paperwork procedures.

To assist banks, Joe Justice, Richmond officer-in-charge, developed procedures

for financial institutions to follow when they redeem stamps. With the help of Federal Reserve banks in Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Richmond, and New York, Justice pulled together a comprehensive handbook that: (1) briefly explains the Food Stamp Program, (2) outlines steps for retail food stores and wholesale food concerns to take in preparing food stamps for deposit, and (3) outlines steps for financial institutions to take in accepting and redeeming for food stamps.

The procedures went to all field offices in the Mid-Atlantic Region. MARO shared these procedures with NERO, who distributed them to all banks in its region. They now have a valuable tool to use whenever banking problems arise.

-Story by Linda Feldman
MARO Public Affairs Staff

Food Programs Participation Update

Following are preliminary estimates of participation in the Federal-State food assistance programs for the month of March with comparisons to the previous month and to the same month of last year.

	<u>Mar. 1987</u>	<u>Feb. 1988</u>	<u>Mar. 1988</u>	<u>2/</u>
<u>Food Stamp Program:</u> 1/				
People participating (mil.)	19.6	18.9	19.2	
Value of bonus coupons (\$ mil.)	907.3	950.7	968.1	
Average bonus per person	\$ 46.20	\$ 50.33	\$ 50.37	
Total program cost (\$ mil.)	1,002.6	1,052.3	1,069.7	
<u>National School Lunch Program:</u>				
Number of schools participating (thous.)	90.2	90.6	90.6	
Children participating (mil.)	24.1	24.3	24.5	
Children reached with free or reduced price lunches (mil.)	11.9	11.7	11.8	
Percentage of lunches served free	42.5	41.2	41.2	
Percentage of lunches served at reduced price..	6.7	6.7	6.7	
Total program cost (\$ mil.)	375.4	366.8	397.3	
<u>School Breakfast Program:</u>				
Number of schools participating (thous.)	37.4	38.7	38.7	
Children participating (mil.)	3.7	3.7	3.8	
Percentage of breakfasts served free or at reduced price	88.4	87.3	87.3	
Total program cost (\$ mil.)	52.6	51.0	55.4	
<u>Child Care Food Program:</u>				
Number of meals served in centers (mil.)	41.5	38.6	43.2	
Number of meals served in homes (mil.)	27.3	28.3	31.6	
Percentage of all meals served free	77.7	78.3	78.2	
Total program cost (\$ mil.)	50.3	50.8	56.3	
<u>Special Supplemental Food Program (WIC):</u>				
People participating (mil.)	3.5	3.5	3.6	
Food cost (\$ mil.)	113.4	119.5	123.5	
Total program cost (\$ mil.)	139.5	148.7	152.0	
<u>Commodity Supplemental Food Program:</u> 3/				
People participating (thous.)	198.7	213.3	220.7	
Total program cost (\$ mil.)	3.5	3.2	3.7	
<u>Food Distribution to Indians and Needy Families:</u>				
Number of projects in operation	106	107	107	
People participating (thous.)	149.3	140.8	141.6	
Total program cost (\$ mil.)	4.4	4.4	4.5	
<u>Temporary Emergency Food Assistance Program:</u>				
Total USDA cost (\$ mil.)	66.4	65.3	64.3	

1/ Puerto Rico has been excluded from all months.

2/ Data collected as of May 24, 1988.

3/ Includes data for all elderly participants.

Job Opportunities

FNS is seeking to fill the vacant positions listed below. To be considered for one of them, submit an up-to-date SF-171, Application for Federal Employment, and current performance appraisal to the appropriate personnel office. If you are interested in a headquarters position, apply to the Operations Branch, Personnel Division, Food and Nutrition Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Alexandria, Virginia

22302. Apply directly to headquarters office for all GM-14 and 15 positions. For regional positions, apply directly to the regional office. For details on the requirements for any of the positions listed below, consult the official vacancy announcement. These are posted on designated bulletin boards or copies can be obtained from the appropriate regional or headquarters personnel office.

Friday Letter Vacancy Listing By Vacancy Number

JOB TITLE	AREA OF CONSID.	SERIES	GRADE	CLOSING DATE	VACANCY NUMBER	OFFICE LOCATION
o Clerk Stay in Schooler	(A)	GW-303	1/2	Open	88-SIS	FNS
o Clerk Typist	(A)	GS-322	2/3/4	Open until Filled	NONE	FNS
o Secretary Typing	(A)	GS-318	4/5/6	Open	88-999	FNS
o Sup Contract Spec	(USDA)	GM-1102	13	6/21/88	88-40	ASD
o Secretary Typing	(FNS)	GS-318	7	6/13/88	88-41	ASD
o Nutritionist	(A)	GS-630	9/11	6/30/88	88-42	SNP
o Clerk Typist	(G)	GS-322	2/3/4	6/8/88	88-43	PED
o Labor Rel Spec	(G)	GS-233	12	7/5	88-44	FNS
o Home Economist	(A)	GS-493	9/11/12	7/5	88-45	HNIS
o Home Economist	(A)	GS-493	7/9	7/5	88-46	HNIS

Office Location

- FNS - Food and Nutrition Service
SNP - Special Nutrition Program
ASD - Administrative Services Division
PED - Personnel Division
HNIS - Human Nutrition Information Service

Area of Consideration

- (A) - All Sources
(FNW) - FNS Nation-wide
(G) - Government-wide
(USDA) - Agency-wide

Linda L. Boling
Editor, Public Information Staff

The Friday Letter is published every 2 weeks by the Public Information Staff of the Food and Nutrition Service. To update mailing address, or to alter number of copies received, please mail changes to the FNS Public Information Staff, 3101 Park Center Drive, Room 823, Alexandria, VA 22302, telephone no. 756-3284.